IMPACT OF 73RD AMENDMENT ON RURAL GOVERNANCE- A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

SYNOPSIS

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The concept of Governance is not new; rather it is as old as human civilization. However, to simply put it, governance means "the process of decision making and the process by which the decisions are implemented or,(not implemented)."[1] The main aim of development is creating a suitable and enabling environment for promoting long, healthy and creative lives. Governance, in any society, aims to ensure this through the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority. In the simplest terms, governance relates to the effective management of affairs of a country at all levels; guarantee its territorial integrity; and secure the safety and over all welfare of its people. Governance encompasses a wide range of issues from concerns about efficient and effective government, including accountability and transparency, to concern about human rights, social cohesion, equity, democracy, participation, corruption, military expenditure, countries in crisis, and last but not least, political thought, culture and discourse.[2] The governance can be good, bad or poor. The good governance is being talked of in the context of bad governance due to inefficiency, corruption, etc. While arbitrary policy making, unaccountable

1 C.P. Barthwal (2003), Good Governance in India, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, p. 5

2 G. ShabbirCheema(2001), "A Governance Approach to Development : New Role for Development Cooperation," Governance, South Asia Perspective, Manohar, New Delhi, , p. 516

bureaucracies, unjust legal system, abuse of executive power, a civil society unengaged in public life and widespread corruption are the characteristics of poor or bad governance and the good governance entails the predictable, open, and enlightened policy making, a bureaucracy imbued with professional ethos, acting in furtherance of public good, the rule of law, transparent processes and a strong civil society participating in public affairs.[3] The governance to be called good governance has to be participatory, rule of law, transparent, responsive, consensus oriented, equity, effectiveness and efficient, accountable and strategic vision.[4]

India being a federal country is governed from three different levels i.e. Centre, state and local. Local government is the govt. which is very near to the people and is armed with the power and authority to effectively deal with the problems of local people and to provide them with required amenities. The rural areas have been provided with the Panchayati Raj System and in the urban areas, the urban local bodies in the form of municipalities and other similar institutions have been working for quite long time, for the proper management of affairs in their respective areas and also for the welfare of people. These institutionsreduce the burden of higher levels of the govt. thus saving

3 A.D. Mishra(2003), "Good Governance:A Conceptual Analysis", Contemporary debates in Public Administration, (ED) by AlkaDhameja, Prentice Hall of India, pp. 158-160

4 Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007), local Governance, Sixth Report, Govt. of India, Oct. , p. I-II

their precious time which can be utilized for the solution of other important issues.

Our constitution provides a clear mandate for democratic decentralization not only through the Directive Principles of State Policy which exhorts the state to promote PanchayatiRaj Institutions but more specifically now through the 73rd and 74thAmendments to the constitution which seek to create an institutional frame work for ushering in grass roots democracy through the medium of genuinely self -governing local bodies in both rural and urban areas of the country.[5]

In this process of democratic decentralization, PRI's have emerged as vital local organs at the grass root levels for effective executions of rural development programmes. Democratic decentralization means a process in which powers and responsibilities are transferred from a central authority to other more local organ. In a democratic system of government democratic decentralization means devolution of decision making authority both at the level of formulation and implementation of plans and programmes within the frame work of a given political structure. In the Indian context Panchayati Raj Institutions are the live example of democratic decentralization, where people are authorized to manage their own affairs at the local levels.

Panchayati Raj Institutions have been in existence in India since Vedic Period. They find mention in Manusmriti and Arthashastra of

5 Ibid – p. II

Kautilya in 400 B.C. In the British period these institutions were slowly demolished. Although some efforts were made to strengthen these institutions by Rippon's resolution of 1882, Royal commission on decentralization 1907, Govt. of India Act,1919 and 1935 but with limited success due to variety of reasons.

Panchayats have no mention in the draft of our constitution prepared in 1948 but with the special efforts of Mahatama Gandhi, they found a place in the chapter on Directive Principles of State Policy of our Constitution. Mahatama Gandhi was the strong supporter of Panchayats who said, *"Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will have a republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self- sustained and capable of managing its affairs. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces.*

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance, but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units. Therefore, the outermost circumference

will not wield power to crush the inner circle, but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it. Mahatma Gandhi.[6]The Panchayati Raj Institutions in India are the prime instrument of decentralization at the grass root level. They act as vehicle in carrying back to the people the power that really belongs to them.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions in India have travelled a long road to acquire a constitutional status from a mere mentioning of it in the constitution in the form of Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 40). Article 40 of the Indian Constitution states: "The state shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government". This article remained a dead letter for many years before finding a place of some importance in the form of BalwantRai Mehta study team report in 1959.[7]

A formal three tier system of Panchayati Raj was introduced in the country in Oct. 1959 on the recommendations of BalwantRai Mehta Committee. But the recommendations of BalwantRai Mehta Committee were implemented in a piece meal manner as the state governments were given options to the models as per the suitability of their needs and requirements. As a result, some states opted for three tier system, some for two tier, yet another for one tier and some of the states did not

6 S.P. Jain (1999), " State wise legislative Provisions on Gram Sabha," in strengthening village Democracy - edited by R.C. Chaudhary and S.P. Jain. National Institute of Rural Development, Hydrabad, p 4

7 Ibid, p.11

introduced the system at all and these institutions were lost in the haze of confusion.[8]

In 1969, the first Administrative Reforms Commission in its report on state administration recommended that the main executive organ of the Panchayati Raj System should be located at the district level in the form of "ZilaParishad" and not at the Block level as PanchayatSamiti. It was of the view that the ZilaParishad would be in a better position to take a composite view of the resources and needs of the entire district and thus will be able to formulate a plan for the area.[9]

In 1977, the Janata Party Government formed a committee under the chairmanship of Sh. Ashok Mehta to go into the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions and to suggest measures to strengthen them into effective local apparatus for decentralized planning and development of rural areas. This committee submitted its report in 1978 and made 132 recommendations to review and strengthen the Panchayati Raj System in India. This Committee recommended that the three tier system of Panchayati Raj should be replaced by the two tier system i.e. ZilaParishad at the district level and below it, the MandalPanchayats consisting of group of villages apart from other recommendations to strengthen these institutions.

The Planning Commission setup 12 members committee under the chairmanship of G.V.K. Rao for reviewing the administrative

8 S.N. Mishra, Lokesh Kumar and Chitali Pal (1996), New Panchayati Raj in Action Mittal Publications, New Delhi., p.1

9 Administrative Reform Commission(1966), Govt. of India: Report on State Administration.

arrangements for rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. This committee came to the conclusion that the developmental process was gradually bureaucratized and divorced from the Panchayati Raj. This phenomena of bureaucratization of development administration as against the democratization weakened the Panchayati Raj Institutions resulting in what is called as "Grass without roots".[10]

The Rajiv Gandhi government appointed another committee during 1986-87 under the chairmanship of eminent Jurist L.M. Singhvi to revitalize Panchayati Raj Institutions for democracy and development which recommended that the Panchayati Raj Institutions should be constitutionally recognized, protected and preserved. For this purpose, a new part should be added in the constitution. This committee also recommended constitutional provisions to ensure regular, free and fair elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.[11]

A Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions was set up under the chairmanship of Dr. P.K. Thungon (1988) to consider the type of political and administrative Structure needed in the district for district planning.

In the beginning,Panchayati Raj System worked successfully in some states. But its performance was not satisfactory. Various

10 M. Laxmikanth(2009), Public Administration, Tata McGraw Hill Publishing Company, New Delhi, , p. 528
11 Ibid – p. 529.

committees constituted at the national and state level and studies conducted by scholars came to the conclusion that Panchayati Raj Institutions could not fulfill the expectations of the rural masses.

So far as the dismal performance of Panchayati Raj Institutions is concerned, several reasons have been assigned by the academicians, researchers and practitioners. The most important ones have been,non-legalistic status of Panchayati Raj Institutions, irregular or untimely elections, frequent supersession and suspensions, lack of adequate financial resources, non-cooperation of bureaucracy, lack of peoples' participation, lack of political will, unsatisfactory devolution of powers and finances and most important one-lack of constitutional status. This was the reason that in mid 70s, a feeling expressed throughout was that 'Panchayati Raj was a God that failed'.[12]

In response to these recommendations, Rajiv Gandhi Government decided to amend the constitution to provide a much needed place to these institutions in the constitution. Government introduced 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in LokSabha in July, 1989 to constitutionalize PRI's and make them more powerful and broad based. This Bill got the approval of LokSabha in August, 1989 but it was not approved by RajyaSabha because it was alleged that it sought to strengthen centralization in the federal system.

12 S.N. Mishra, Lokesh Kumar and ChaitaliPal(1996), Opcit. , P.1

Successive governments also made unsuccessful efforts. V.P. Singh government after taking over announced that the government would take steps to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions. In this regard, a Constitutional Amendment Bill was also introduced in LokSabha but due to the fall of government, the bill lapsed.

The Congress Government headed by P.V. NarasimhaRao again considered the issue of providing a constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions. The earlier proposals were modified to remove controversial provisions. Finally in 1991, after synthesizing important features of the earlier exercise on this subject, the government drafted and introduced the 73rd Amendment Bill in Parliament which was passed in 1992. After having been ratified by 17 states, this emerged as the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 and came into effect on April 24, 1993. This act is a milestone in the history of independent India. With the incorporation of wide ranging provisions dealing with the electoral processes, finances, planning, this amendment aims at transforming the Panchayats into strong and viable units of self-government and bringing them into the mainstream of the country's socio-economic development.

The salient features of 73rd Amendment Act, 1992

- Provision of Gram Sabha consisting of all the eligible voters of Gram Sabha area and exercising such powers and performing such functions as the legislature of the state may provide by law.

- Auniform three tier structure of Panchayati Raj except those states whose population does not exceed 20 lakh.
- All the seats in Panchayat at every level are to be filled by directly elected representatives.
- Reservation of seats for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their population and not less than 1/3 of the total seats are to be reserved for women.
- A uniform term of five years has been provided for the PRIs and in the event of supersession, elections should be completed before the expiry of six months from the date of dissolution.
- The state legislatures have been given the power to authorise the panchayats to levy, collect and appropriate suitable local taxes and also provide for making grants-in-aid to the Panchayats.
- A State Finance Commission has to be constituted once in every five years to review the financial position of Panchayats and to make recommendations to the state on the distribution of funds between the State and Panchayats.
- This act provides for the constitution of State Election Commission to supervise, direct and control the elections to local bodies.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions have been empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice on the subjects mentioned in the XIschedule of the constitution (29 functional items).

Constitutional base for Panchayati Raj Institutions was essential because the state governments were not enthusiastic about the creation of Panchayati Raj Institutions and to share power with them. But after the recommendations of BalwantRai Mehta Committee, some states established PRI and some states did not bother. It was realized that status and dignity to Panchayati Raj Institutions to make them responsive and viable institutions is very essential and this required constitutional support. Local self-government and Panchayati Raj is a state subject in our Constitution and the Central Government cannot pass any law unless Constitution is amended. That is why Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act was passed.[13]

As per the requirements of 73rd Constitution Amendment Act 1992, every state government has now amended its Panchayati Raj Act in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Though Karnataka and Bihar has been the first two states to amend their Panchayati Raj Act but it goes to the credit of Madhya Pradesh to hold elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions first. Later on every state came forward to meet the deadline set by the Central government to either pass new PanchayatiRaj laws or to amend the existing ones. The state of Himachal Pradesh enacted its new Panchayati Raj Act in 1994.

13 Dr. Hoshiar Singh(2004), Local Government, KitabMahal, New Delhi, p. 25

Himachal Pradesh: A Profile

At the time of Independence, half of the present territory of Himachal Pradesh was divided into 30 princely states and the other half was a part of the Punjab province of the British Empire. Himachal Pradesh acquired its present position as a dynamic hill state of India in phases. Its resources of forests, fruits, minerals and Hydel power hold the promise of great progress. The state is called the Apple belt of India. Himachal Pradesh with an area of 55673sq.km is one of the smaller states of India. It ranks 17th among the states and U.Ts in terms of area. With a population of 68.56 lakh, H.P. ranks 20th among the states and UTs, as per the census of 2011.

Himachal Pradesh accounted for 1.7 percent of the total area of the country and 0.57 percent of the total population. The density of population of this state is 123 persons per sq.km.and it ranks 28th. The urban population is 6.5 Lakh which constitutes 10.04 percent of the total population of the state which is lowest among all the states and union territories. Its rural population is 61 Lack which is 89.96 Percent of the total population of the state.In terms of literacy, it ranks 5th according to 2011 census. Male literacy rate is 90.83 Percent and female is 76.06 percent. On 25 January 1971 this state was granted full-fledged statehood. There has been no change in the number of districts since 1972, Lahaulspiti is the largest and Hamirpur is the smallest district in terms of area. Around 90% of the state population lives the rural areas

with agriculture as their main occupation and governed by Panchayati Raj Institutions.

PANCHAYATI RAJ IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Panchayati Raj System in Himachal Pradesh was established in statutory form in 1952. Prior to this Act, the number of Panchayats was 280 which rose to 638 till 1962. On 1st November, 1966, the hilly areas of Punjab were merged with Himachal Pradesh. So to bring uniformity in the Panchayati Raj System of old and new areas, the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1968 was passed and two tier Panchayati Raj System was established throughout the state.

The Constitution's 73rd Amendment Act, 1992 was passed by the Parliament with a view to restructure and constitutionalise the system of Panchayati Raj. This new initiative provides for well-defined duration, safeguard against prolonged supervision, provision for regular elections, representation to various sections of the society and devolution of powers, authority and finances.Himachal Pradesh is one of the states which enacted new legislation i.e. the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act- 1994 in the light of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.
Simultaneously the State Finance Commission and State Election Commission wereestablished three-tier Panchayati Raj System replaced two-tier system which was in existence earlier.

Salient features of H.P. Panchayati Raj Act, 1994

- Gram Sabha consisting of all the eligible voters of Sabha area.

- Every Gram Sabha to hold four general meetings in a year on the predetermined dates.
- Establishment of three-tier Panchayati Raj System i.e. Gram Panchayat at village level, PanchayatSamiti at intermediate level and ZilaParishad at the district level.
- Reservation of seats for SCs, STs, BCs in proportion to their population and 50% of the seats are to be reserved for women (earlier 33%).
- Every Panchayat unless dissolved, shall have a uniform 5 years term.
- Provisions for the delegation of powers and functions and empowerment to levy collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.
- Constitution of Finance Commission to review the financial position of Panchayats.
- State Election Commission is required to be established for free and fair election to PRIs.

At present there are 3243 Gram Panchayats, 77 PanchayatSamitiesand 12 ZilaParishads in the state.

Panchayati Raj in District Hamirpur and Chamba

District Hamirpur came into existence in 1972 by carving it out from Kangra district. It is well connected with roads from all sides.

Hamirpur town is the head quarter of this district which lies on Shimla-Dharamsala road.

Hamirpur is the most literate district of Himachal Pradesh. Total Population of this district according to 2011 census is 4, 54,768. Its economy is primarily agriculture based. Literacy rate of this district is 88.15 percent out of which male literacy is 94.36 percent and female literacy is 82.62 percent which is highest in the state. This district is having four sub divisions, six tehsils, six development blocks, 229 village Panchayats, six PanchayatSamities and one ZilaParishad.

Chamba District is wholly mountainous district of the State. According to 2011 census the total population of state is 5,18,844 and density 80 inhabitants per square kilometer. The sex ratio is 989 females against 1000 males. The literacy rate is 73.19% this district have six development blocks and 270 village panchayats. Three blocks have been declared as backward blocks. Bharmour and Pangi are tribal blocks. More than 45% of the district is inhabited by socially backward SC/ST population. The total area of this district is 6528 square kilometer. In 2006 Ministry of Panchayati Raj named it one of the country's 2050 most backward districts.

The PRIs, in Himachal are operating as per the new Panchayati Raj Act 1994 from almost 2 decades. But so far, no attempt has been made to analyse the working of these Institutions in the light of 73rd Amendment. This study is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature.

Review of Literature

After the enactment of 73rd and 74th Amendments, Local Governance has generated a new debate. These Amendments have opened new areas for discussion and research. Various experts and researchers have shown interest by contributing research papers, initiating research projects and some organizations have taken lead by organizing conferences. Some important works/studies in this field are as under.

Ashok Kumar (1993)[14] states that factors such as role of women in decision making in the family as well as in the community, their literacy, educational status, involvement in social, political and economic activities, career-positions and their legal status in terms of marriage, divorce and inheritance of property play a deterministic role in defining the status of women in India.

Neela Mukherjee (1994)[15] stresses that it is of extreme importance that women should actively participate in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) which are at present monopolised by the men. Their participation would not only uplift the status of women in the family/household and society but also help in the overall progress of the nation.

14 Ashok Kumar(1993), Empowering the Rural Women by Ashok Kumar as in women in contemporary Indian Society (ed.) Anmol Publication, New Delhi, .

15 NeelaMukharjee (1994), "Rural women and Panchayati Raj Institutions," Kurukeshtra, June.

Amitava Mukherjee's (1994)[16] edited book contains various articles by prominent writers. These articles reflect the major problems and bottlenecks being faced by Panchayati Raj Institutions. Various Measures have also been suggested by the author to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

S.P. Jain (1995)[17] analyzed that the need of the hour is to create inter linkages between three tiers of Panchayati Raj System. These linkages are to be in planning process, staffing at different levels, coordination and finances. The PRIs are yet to get a strong foot-hold as seemingly these bodies have been constituted but they have not been assigned the powers and functions to play their role in the right perspective and context.

S.N. Mishra, Lokesh Kumar and Chaitali Ram (1996)[18]analysed the functioning of newly elected Panchayati Raj Institutions of Madhya Pradesh under the new framework i.e. after the enactment of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. It goes to the credit of Government of Madhya Pradesh that it held the elections to all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj simultaneously first under the new system. Researchers in their study found that most of the Panchayats lack basic infrastructure, meetings of the Panchayats are held but large absenteeismis there, financial health of these institutions is very weak,

16 AmitavaMukharjee (1994), Decentralization :Panchayats in Nineties, Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi.

17 S.P.Jain (1995),"Panchayati Raj Institutions in India : An Apraisal", National Institute of rural Development, Hydrabad, 1995, PP-1-XXII

18 S.N. Mishra, Lokeshkumar and Chaitali Pal, Opcit., PP. 64-67.

most of the Gram Panchayats are without Gram Sewaksand the fulfillment of the basic dream of Mahatma Gandhi to provide cheap and speedy justice has not been fulfilled. The researchers suggested that the peoples representatives should have power to levy taxes, provision of training for elected representatives should be made, devolution of powers, functions and authority needs to be enforced and there should be anindependent audit and accounts cell at all levels of PRIs. .

VinaMajumdar (1997)[19] underlines that the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution passed by the Parliament in 1992 and ratified in 1993 provided for 33 percent reservation for women among elected representatives to the local governments. This has been hailed as a turning point in the direction of empowerment of women as it made it possible for over one million rural women to join village Panchayat posts as Sarpanch or Adhyaksha or as a member of community Administration. It is also noteworthy that though most rural women are illiterate, deprived and belongs to the category of other backward classes; many of them have proudly executed their assertiveness and have been acclaimed as able administrator

A Krishna Rao and M. Sarojni (1998)[20] emphasized the need for developing a rational approach for allocating resources to the Panchayati Raj bodies. They have specified that there has to be a balance between the designated functions and allocated financial resources. They

19 VinaMajumdar (1997), Historical Sounding , Seminar, Vol-457, P-19

20 A Krishna Rao and M.Sarojni(1998), "State local fiscal transfers.A suggested approach," *in state local fiscal relation in India*, KonradAdenquer Foundation, pp 17-25

further observed that not much can be gained by transferring the power to levy and collect any state tax, rather financial transfers should be based on carefully chosen criteria based on fiscal needs. So the task of State Finance Commission is much more difficult than the Union Finance Commission because the latter has to deal with transfer to one level only. According to them, financial resources of local bodies can be augmented by transferring taxation powers, sharing revenue with local bodies and providing substantial grants-in-aid.

SujathaRao (1998)[21]suggested that a major part of revenue collection and expenditure should be left in the hands of PRIs. The researchers have found that no doubt all states have set up State Finance Commissions, but ironically even these commissions have not focused on the question of fiscal relations between the state government and local bodies. The researcher found that in most states, taxes assigned to Panchayats lack buoyancy and elasticity. Some of the resources assigned to PRIs cannot be fully tapped because of overlapping of jurisdiction. Some of the revenue resources falling in the domain of local bodies are collected by the government but not shared with the local bodies.

M.A. Oommen(1998)[22] argues that a rational flow of funds is the key to rational fiscal relations. The nature and magnitude of the flow of funds to local bodies depends upon the degree of fiscal decentralization envisaged and practiced. While the constitution provides for the framework for decentralization, the lack of political will and the

21 SujathaRao,"State local fiscal relations: implications for decentralization,"Ibid. pp 26-37

22 M.A. Oommen," State-Local Fiscal Relations in India: A search for an Analytical Framework", Ibid pp 38-51

negative vision of the bureaucracy vis-a-vis local bodies continue to be a deterrent in the meaningful evolution of local bodies. According to the writer, two basic tasks are the key to fiscal decentralization; an efficient assignment of functions and finances, and a decision of an efficient and equitable transfer mechanism. It is basically tax sharing which is an important instrument in filling the vertical gap in resources of the local bodies.

O.P. Bohra(1998)[23] while analyzing the financial resources of Panchayat Raj Institutions in India argues that parameters like tax assignment, sharing of taxes and grants-in-aid play a crucial role. Keeping fiscal autonomy in view, the buoyant and elastic income sources should be assigned to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The state taxes having local base of collection need to be shared justly/judicially with the local bodies. Some appropriate distribution criteria should be evolved by the state finance commissions for distribution of grants-in-aid to the various levels of PRIs.

NoorjahanBaba(1998)[24] argues for the need to look at the entire issue of resource-generation of the local bodies in an interdisciplinary perspective by responding to the needs and parameters of democracy. She argues that centre should devolve more financial powers to the states to facilitate the later to transfer adequate funds to the local bodies.

23 O.P. Bohra ,"Financial Resources of panchayats in India", Ibid pp 83-102

24 Nourjahan Baba, "Resource Mobilisation for PRIs: Tax assignment and tax Transfers", ibid, pp 103-115

BhagabataPatro(1998)[25] argues that it is necessary to equalize the fiscal capacities of the states across the country and make them capable of sacrificing share of their own revenue to the local government units. In this context, overlapping of functions between the state and the local government is required to be avoided. The logic that while resource sharing is important for effective co-operative federalism; it should be in the backdrop of fiscal capacity of both the giver and taker. While extending the logic to state-local fiscal relations, the issue becomes more important as the capacity of the state government is much less as compared to centre.

R.P. Joshi (1998)[26] book 'Constitutionalisation of Panchayati Raj: A reassessment' which contains articles by experts highlighted that based on the framework provided in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the governments of various states have come out with new legislations followed by enforcement of reservation provisions. Consequently, women and weaker sections are endowed with enthusiasm never seen before. No doubt some delegation of powers did take place, the question of resource-crunch continued to haunt as ever before.

25 Bhagabata Patro and G.D. Prasad, "Inter-State Disparity in fiscal Capacity and its implications for State-Local Fiscal relation in India", ibid, pp 113-125

26 R.P. Joshi (1998) ," Whither Panchayati Raj", in R.P. Joshi,s Constitutionalization of Pachayati Raj, Rawat Publication, jaipur, PP-185-195

Mohinder Singh (1998)[27] is his study 'Role of Gram Panchayats after 73rd Constitutional Amendment: A study of Haryana' concluded that according to the provisions made in the Act, representation has been given to SCs, ST, OBC and women in Gram Panchayats. However the role of women has not been effective because of proxy. Despite the constitutional status given to Gram Sabha, this body could not be activated and remained only on papers. Although the Gram Panchayats have played an important role in different programmes and schemes meant for developing the weaker section, yet there remains enough scope for development.

H.S. Mehta (1998)[28] while tracing the evolution of PR in India and explaining its rationale and philosophy, outlines the features of 73rdAmendment Act including the new functional domain of PRI. He attempt to point out the new PR system in Rajasthan which stand enable in to comprehend working of the new structure and evaluate their performance.

Vibhuti Singh Shekhawat (1998)[29] feels that despite the constitutional status given to these institutions, there shall continue to be obstacles from the states in areas of their premature dissolutions, electioneering process, decentralization and delegation of authority. Besides identifying problem areas, he gave numbers of suggestions to

27 Mohinder Singh (1998)," Role of Gram Panchayats After 73rd Constitutional Amendment: A study of Haryana", Kurukeshtra, August, 1998. P-

28 H.S. Mehta (1998), "The Constitutional- Legal Perspective of Panchayati Raj, Opcit.PP79-93

29 Vibhuti Singh Shekhawat (1998),"Panchayati Raj Institutions in India: Summated rating and dimensional analysis,"Opcit. -PP 94-98

strengthen this third tier of the govt. which has potential of getting democracy at the door step of people.

E .A. Narayana (1998)[30] highlighted that the empowerment of scheduled caste, scheduled tribe and other backward classes through their representation on the new structure of Panchayati Raj has been the most significant issue of concern and attention. According to the author, the past experience has not been very encouraging and 'fruits of development' were enjoyedbyelites. He strongly advocated direct election for chairperson at the intermediate and district levels and mobilization of weaker section.

Shiv Chandra (1998)[31] pointed out that PRI can prove to be a viable mechanism for involving rural masses in health care and sanitation of the new areas.They can excel is the field of services for rural health care and thereby can serve thousands of people from dying on account of malnutrition and quacks.

B.Hooja (1998)[32] argues that inspite of 73rd constitutional amendment, PRI have not been really empowered in true sense. He stressed that PRI must have their defined identities by having financial and technical resources of their own.

30 E.A. Narayana (1998),"Panchayati Raj and Scheduled Caste, Schedules Tribes and other Backward Classes," Opcit. PP-99-109

31 Shiv Chandra (1998)," Panchayati Raj and Health Care Quo Vadis," Opcit., PP-165-171

32 B.Hooja(1998), "Resurrecting Panchayati Raj towards a cooperative commonwealth of Panchayats", Opcit.

R.P. Joshi (1998)[33] in his observation on new PR system highlighted the inadequacies of the present system and has given suggestions for improving and strengthening it. He further says that it would not be exaggeration to say that there is a potential and scope for the new system to bring about grassroots democracy in true sense.

AshaKaushik (1998)[34] in her paper focused onGandhian perspective in the context of constitutionalization of Panchayati Raj and contends that attempt to realize 'Gran Swaraj' through 73rd Amendment is a hasty conception which ignores political reality in India as well as the key premises of the Gandhian frame work. She feel that although Constitutinalization of PR is a notable improvement over perivous arrangement but can prove ineffective if it is not accompanied by political will and mass awareness.

S.P.Jain (1999)[35] in his paper an ' State –wise legislative provision on gram sabha provides useful information about its structure, composition, size and area, membership pattern of meeting and quorum in different states. He has also highlighted the salient feature of this institution.

V.A.Vasuudevaraju (1999)[36] in his paper on empowerment of Gram Sabha has analyzed the nature of functions which have been assigned in different state acts and advocated for providing greater autonomy to Gram Sabha. He has made several suggestions which could

33 R.P.Joshi (1998) ' Whither Panchayati Raj', Opcit., PP-185-195

34 AshaKaushik (1998), " Constitutinalization of Panchayati Raj ,Opcit., PP-37-46

35 S.P. Jain (1999), " State wise legislative Provisions on Gram Sabha," in strengthening village Democracy-edited by R.C. Chaudhary and S.P. Jain. National Institute of Rural Development, Hydrabad,PP 81-146

36 V.A. VasudevaRaju (1999), " Empowerment of Gram Sabha", Ibid, PP- 147-162

be helpful in empowering the Gram Sabha within the frame work of 73rd Constitutional Amendments.

Jain (1999)[37] was of the view that interference of political parties in the functioning of PRIs will have impact in future. Non devolution of finances and various functions and responsibilities coupled with illiteracy among the members will leave a negative impact on PRIs.

S.K. Chaturvedi (1999)[38] has highlighted that 73rd Amendment in the Constitution ensures 33 per cent reservation for women in Panchayats but many factors such as criminalization of politics, male dominance in a patriarchal society, illiteracy, and domestic compulsions hamper their much-desired participation in the political process. Many cases in the states of Haryana, UP, Bihar, Rajasthan and Maharashtra have been reported where the women Panchayat leaders were persecuted by village heavy weights as they declined to fall in line. Many other reasons like rigidity of traditions, social structure, economic poverty, lack of political awareness, cultural rigidity, family pressures, educational backwardness have also hindered their adequate participation in the political machinery.

AmandeepSingh (1999-2000)[39] has studied the working of PanchayatSamiti in Rajpura Block of Punjab and concluded that the

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37 S.C. Jain, (1999), "GrammenVikas Ki Parikalpna Main Panchayati Raj VayasthakiBhumika" Kurukeshetra Vol. 44 June1999, PP-15-16.

38 S.K. Chaturvedi(1999), Women Participation in Political Process, as in Social Justice and Women in India, SwarajPrakashan, p. 127.

39 AmardeepSingh(1999), A study of performance of PanchayatSamitiRajpura post 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act-1992, Unpublished M.Phil thesis, submitted to P.U, Chandigarh, .

PRIs are still in a fluid state. The author delineates that due to lack of appropriate infrastructure, it is beyond the purview of PanchayatSamiti to perform the functions enlisted in 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. Further he proves that bureaucratic apathy and non-participation of the people is also affecting the working of PanchayatSamiti. It is time that these rural bodies should themselves become self- sufficient and even the government should transfer adequate functions and funds, and provide the PRIs with adequate infrastructure.

S. Sundariand N. Geetha (2001)[40] investigated the status of women in terms of demographic and economic aspects in the pre-independence and post-independence era, specifically in the state of Tamil Nadu. An effort has also been made towards the performance appraisal of various development programmes implemented. Though there is slight empowerment in the areas of literacy, work participation and life expectancy, the parameters of occupational distribution, sex ratio and maternal mortality does not reveal any significant progress.

R.B. Bhagat (2002)[41] opined that the rural and urban areas under the new Panchayati Raj Amendment will not only have to make their own welfare and developmental plans but also mobilize adequate resources locally. This brings into sharp focus the many problems thrown up by the existing definition of rural and urban areas which impinge on effective local governances.

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40 S. Sundari and N. Geetha (2001), "Women Development and Empowerment in Tamil Nadu: A performance appraisal," Indian Journal of Economics, 82 (1), July, PP. 25-43.

41 R.B. Bhagat,(2002)," Challenges of Rural-Urban classification for decentralised Governance", Economicand Political Weekly, No. 25, June, ..

RanbirSingh (2002)[42] compares the situation of pre and post 73rd Amendment Act. He delineates that this Constitutional Amendment Act has resulted into the regular elections, setting up of the State Finance Commission, provision of reservation etc. He at the same time has also brought into focus the issues which deserve serious attention such as the unstable position of the chairperson, unclear/unspecific/vague list of the functions which merely exist in paper and the large chunk of village common lands which are under unauthorized occupation.

Ponnuraj (2003)[43] suggests the ways of improving the working of PRIs. He suggests that these bodies cannot only be involved directly in providing infrastructure.

Mahi Pal (2004)[44] has identified the basic objectives of the 73rd Amendment as providing certainty, continuity and strength to the Panchayats. The experiences of the functioning of the Panchayats reveal that while elections to these bodies have been held regularly, barring a few states; there has been a lack of drive on the part of states in devolving powers to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. He has also chalked out a future course of action for further deepening the grass roots democracy to bring about socio economic transformation in rural India.

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42 Ranbir Singh(2002), "Haryana Panchayati Raj: Creating Political Awareness," Kurukshetra, january, 50(3)

43 S. P. Ponnuraj(2003), "Role of Panchayats Raj institutions in drinking water supply," Kurukshetra, October, , 51 (12), PP- 16-22.

44 Mahi Pal (2004) ,"Panchayati Raj and Rural governance"Economic and Political Weekly, No. 2, January

S.K. Singh (2004)[45] pointed out that there is a growing realization all over the world that decentralization of power to the local units of government is one of the best way of empowering people, promoting public participation and increasing efficiency. It is also felt that fiscal decentralization can help mobilize resources, introduce local solutions and promote equitable growth by bringing the poor into main stream development. The recent past has witnessed many countries including developing countries adopting various forms of decentralization for facilitating people's participation in rural development.

Desai (2005)[46] has emphasized the importance of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of multi-directional programmes aimed at rural development. Further he has analyzed the relevant problems related to functions, finances and programmes, initiated to improve the standard of rural people and rendered appropriate suggestions for rural development. KaramvirKhera (2006)[47] in his study has emphasised that the dominance of the officials, especially of the DRDAs at the district level has radically minimized the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of rural development programmes. He also found that that the Panchayati Raj leaders at various levels encounter severe control of bureaucratic machinery in

45 S.K. Singh (2004), Panchayat Raj Finances in Madhya Pradesh, Concept Publishing House , New Delhi, PP.XVI+162. (Book Review)

46 VasantDesai(2005), PanchayatiRaj : Power to the people, Himalaya Publishing Home, Bombay, .

47 KaramvirKhera(2006), "Democratic Decentralization and rural Development: A comparative Study of Kaithal and Karnal Districts of Haryana, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis submitted to P.U. Chandigarh, .

their functioning and supervision, thus killing initiative and independence.

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2007)[48] in its sixth report on local governance has examined in detail the issues relating to rural and urban local governance in India with a special focus on the need for real democratic decentralization in the country. The Commission examines three issues in parts. First part deals with common issues of local governance, second with rural and third with urban governance.

Reddy (2007)[49] in his paper on genesis of Panchayati Raj System observes that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act endowing Panchayati Raj institutions with constitutional status is a significant milestone in the evolution of democracy at the grassroots level. However the critical evaluation of the functioning of PRIs which revealed success during the initial couple of years did not stay for long and has shown disappointing trends. The need of the hour is that political parties including non-governmentalorganisations enlighten citizens and accept the challenges.

Padhy (2007)[50] has analysed the component of empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institutions and NGOs. The philosophy of 73rd Amendment stresses on empowering people to take decisions about

48 Second Administrative Reforms Commission(2007), local Governance ,Sixth Report, Govt. of India,

49 Ram Reddy (2007), Pattern of Panchayat Raj in India, Heritage Publishers, New Delhi,

50 S.C. Padhy,(2007),"Empowerment and Development: Pachayati Raj Role of NGO's," as in RatnaGhosh and Alok Kumar Pramanik (Ed.)' Panchayat System in India: Historical, Constitutional and Financial Analysis, Karishma Publishers, N. Delhi-

themselves and this is in tune with the very basic tenets of NGOs and expedites their objectives. He observes that the working of NGOs and Panchayats in unison can drastically transform the rural scenario.

Shiv Raj Singh (2007)[51] outlines the limitations of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. He feels that there is a need to define the powers and functions of each tier distinctively. It is also required that the powers of bureaucracy should be curtailed by incorporating certain changes in this Act. He is of the opinion that the voting right of the M.Ps and MLAs should be done away with as it is in contradiction of the spirit of decentralization. He suggests that the powers and the responsibilities of the Gram Sabha should be made more specific and moreover, the financial position of the PRIs should be improved. An effective step can be that at least 50% of the total allocation in the state budget should be for these institutions.

Pamela Singh (2007)[52] observes that discrimination against women is one of the most pervading social phenomenon. Even though women constitute half of the world's population, they are not equal partners in decision making. They are relegated to a secondary position, be at the household, society, work place or governance. This crisis is deeper in the developing countries. The goal of women's empowerment is not just

51 Shiv Raj Singh(2007), "Reforms for Empowerment of Panchayati Raj Bodies," Indian Journal of Public Administration, July-Sept., 53 (3) , PP 516-521.

52 Pamela Singh(2007), Women participation in Panchayati Raj-Nature and Effectiveness, RawatPublication, Jaipur, PP-10-285

to change the hierarchical gender relations but also to change all hierarchical relations in society, class, caste, race and ethnic relations.

RakeshHooja (2008)[53] in his article highlighted that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment has also highlighted the expectations from decentralization of democratic institutions at the grassroots. Many representatives elected to these bodies require training in basic skills of developmental planning. Same is the case with state functionaries who have to familiarize themselves with the decentralized planning and implementation. The author discusses the desired contents of training programmes for the elected representatives as well as Panchayat officials. It emphasizes that the training approach should keep in mind the impact of scientific customs, traditions and conventions of the people whom it intends to train.

NupurTiwari (2008)[54] in her article Women in Panchayati Raj has pointed out that the traditional institutions of local governance have not given space to women. Many of the factors that hindered women in the earlier system continue to exist and are under operation in rural areas. In fact gender as a phenomenon hardly ever appears in a pure form. Through the implementation of reservation in Panchayats, women have got an opportunity to raise their concerns and opinions in Gram Sabha.

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53 RakeshHooja (2008)," Capacity Building for Rajasthan's Panchayat Representatives and Functionaries - What the training effort should ," The India Journal of Public Administration,Vol LIV, No.1, January - March, pp 1-20.

54 NupurTiwari(2008)," women in Pacnhayti Raj,"-Ibid PP-34-47

Their experiences in PRIs have also been varied and at the times startling. Nevertheless women in PRIs still lack the capacity and capability to raise voice against the various issues. The opportunities relating to raising issues and participating in decision making process need to be strengthened through adequate training and capacity building. This may help these women representatives tide over the social and economic disadvantage and face male domination and bureaucratic apathy.

Balaramuluand D. Ravinder (2008)[55] in their article examine the functioning of Gram Sabha and village secretariat in Andhra Pradesh and highlight the instances where lack of coordination and proper perspective have rendered the whole exercise ineffective. The enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and the subsequent state-wise Panchayat Raj legislation in India have brought into force the significance of grassroots democratic processes. The change in the Indian political system is the result of a growing conviction that central and the state governments cannot achieve growth and development without peoples direct participation and initiatives. This experience has brought into focus the lesson that the success of the new Panchayati Raj System largely depends upon the devolution of resources, provision of functionaries, finances and powers by the state to the PRIs and also on the commitment of local leadership and the people.

55 CH. Balaramulu and D. Ravinder(2008), "Governance of Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh," Ibid., PP 76-90.

HarsukhjitKaur (2008)[56] in her article on 'Role Performance of women leaders at Grassroots level-A case study of Kharar Block of Ropar District in Punjab' highlighted that young and middle aged women showed interest in leadership at the grassroots level. Young women below 40 usually do not become members because of role conflict and women above 70 do not enter this domain because of physical constraints. 73rd Amendment Act has contributed substantially to the political empowerment of women and the increased the number of elected female representatives. They have been given opportunities to participate in the socio-economic development of their area. The potential is there but the hidden energy needs to be identified, brought to the surface and made use of.

Nagpal (2009)[57] analyses the various facets of the empowerment of the people enshrined in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act. The researcher concludes that the more empowerment of the women and the other weaker sections is welcomed all over but these sections are still unaware of most of the provisions of the Act. The study proves that the men participate more actively than the women and the relations among the officials and the elected representatives are cordial. Furthermore, the vital factor of people's participation is lacking. He has suggested that adequate transfer of funds should be done, strict check should be kept on

56 HarsukhjitKaur ((2008), "Role Performance of Women leaders at Grassroot level-A Care Study of Kharar Block of Ropar District Punjab", Ibid, PP 119-131.

57 RiteshNagpal(2009), Study of Peoples Empowerment through Panchayat Raj Institutions, A case study of Sirsa District, unpublished P.hdThesis submitted to Panjab University, Chandigarh.

misappropriation of funds and people's participation should be increased.

S.A. Palekar (2009)[58] in his analysis of the working of Panchayati Raj argued that the movement was started with laudable objectives and hopes. A new democratic structure was devised on the assumption that the establishment of a chain of new democratic institutions at the grass root level would evoke peoples' participation and open many more avenues to the rural community for their participation in the political process of the country. There are many achievement to the credit of Panchayati Raj notably, looking after the interests of weaker sections of the society, significant role played in agricultural production, welfare and developmental role and generating political awakening.

Ghosh (2010)[59] opines that the implementation of the 73rd Amendment Act has suffered from complete negligence. Even after 17 years of coming into effect, the state governments are found to be unable or unwilling to engage with restricting of allocation of powers and responsibilities between the governments at two levels. Further, the author draws our attention to the recent judgements of the apex court that seems to give a seal of approval to the actions of state and the central government. The author concluded that normally finance follows functions but none of the four finance commissions that have worked in

58 S.A. Palakar(2009), "The working of Panchayati Raj," Indian Journal of Public Administration,Jan- to March, , 5 (1) PP-126-137

59 BhaddhadedGhosh(2010), "Decentralization : A Constitutional Mandate", Rhtoric, Economic and Political Weekly, September 18-24, 45(38) PP 83-84.

the post constitution Act period showed an interest in proving into the question of assignment of functions to the local bodies.

B.M. Sharma (2010)[60]proposes that with the incoming of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, there is a possibility of emergence of third tier of local governance as district government, as in article 243, the local government has been referred to as district government at several points. He also points out that as a result of these Amendments, local institutions have started playing a very proactive role in changing local governance in rural as well as in urban areas. But owing to the problems such as apathy of state governments in transferring subjects and providing sufficient funds to these institutions, corruption at local level and lack of assertiveness on the part of women representatives, these institutions are still unable to perform as effectively as they can. This grim situation can be improved by making poor, marginalized and weak people empowered through substantial measures.

Palanithurai (2011)[61] observes that even before the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, there were several decision making bodies at the grassroots level in many communities which performed very well than the Gram Sabha. It was so because they were createdaccording to people's convenience, agenda was decided by the

60 B.M. Sharma(2010), A step towards district governments and the third tier of Indian Union (with special reference to 73rd and 74th constituted Amendments)," Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. LVI, No.2, April-June , PP. 202-216.

61 G. Palanithurai(2011), "Gram Sabha: A New Deal for Panchayati Raj," Yojana, February, 55, pp 10-13.

people, almost negligible supervision, no rigid rules, no paper work and the decisions got implemented. The author therefore suggests that to make Gram Sabha more effective, its designing should be reviewed, it should be empowered enough to carry out the decisions, its role should be specified and made clearer, and it should be provided with adequate flexibility of operations.

Kunnumkal (2011)[62] opines that the grassroots democracy has come to stay in India through the instrumentality of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. The author further gives his views regarding the working of PRIs and comes to the conclusion that though there are some PRIs which are very active and strong while there are others which are lagging behind. This comparative inactive and weak state of such PRIs is due to several reasons like organic link between Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, lack of capability and professionalism, discretion by the states, non-devolution of funds, functions and functionaries and many more.

AmalMandal (2011)[63] in his article 'Gram Sabha- A conceptual explorations' has highlighted that the working of Gram Sabha throughout the Indian states substantiates that there is galloping gap between theory and practice, between what it could and what it does in reality. Most of the investigation reports reveal that Gram Sabha has so

62 Mathew C Kunnumkal(2011),"Grass root level Democracy in India: An Assessment", Yojana,February, 55, PP. 5-9.

63 AmalMandal(2011),"Gram Sabha – A Conceptual Explanation,"the Indian journal of Public Administration.vol. LVII, No.2, April-June, .PP.20-212.

far failed to fulfill its role as a deliberative body, as a participating forum and as an effective mechanism for upholding accountability.

Dr. B.P.S Bhadouria and Dr. V.B. Dubey(2011)[64] in their study 'Panchayati Raj and Rural Development. A study in Rural Local Finances in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, highlighted that the scarcity of local resources inhibits the quality as well as the extent of functioning of Panchayati Raj. This paucity impedes the efforts to promote rural development, directly as well as indirectly. They suggested that in order to make Panchayati Raj organizations more meaningful for rural development in our country, opportunities need to be provided to rural people for involvement in development functions and decision making.

VangaraBhumaiah and S.N. Arjun Kumar (2011)[65] in their article 'Panchayti Raj in India: A Review' have opined that though the institutions of Panchayati Raj have been established in India, still there is a long way to go in making this system fruitful and successful in achieving the ultimate goal of taking governance to the grassroots level. Though the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act -1992 has introduced far-reaching changes in the structural and functional aspects of Panchayati Raj system, there are still many bottlenecks in its functioning

64 Dr. BPS Bhadouria (2011),Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Common Wealth Publishers, New Delhi, PP. 1-245

65 VangaraBhumaiah and S.N. Arjun Kumar(2011), Panchayati Raj in India –A Review, Third Concept, An International Journal of Ideas, Vol. 24, No. 288 February , PP. 28-30.

which are to be overcome. The Panchayati Raj System has completed 53 years of enactment, but it has not been so successful as expected.

Manjunath S. Hosagur (2012)[66] in his paper 'Role of Panchayats in Rural Development –A Political Study' has said that during last sixty years, several attempts have been made to bring about effective decentralization, both political and economic, but with limited success. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act- 1992 marked a new era in the democratic set up of the country as it created Panchayati Raj Institutions as three tiers of self -governance below the level of states in the federal set up. It is also a landmark in the decentralized development as it envisions people's participation in the process of planning, decision making, implementation and delivery.

After twenty years of 73rd Amendment of the constitution the Panchyati Raj Institution are deprived of their rights. It is due to the monopoly of politicians and bureaucrats. In Punjab only five departments have been transferred to these institutions whereas, the constitution provides for 29 departments (Some part of elementary education, rural health, animal husbandry,work relating to social security). Position in Haryana is little better than Punjab where 10 departments are with Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Panchayati Raj Act of -1992 which provided constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institution came into existence two decades back.

66 Manjunath S. Hosagur (2012), Role of Panchayats in Rural Development : A Political study, third concept An international Journal of Ideas, vol. 26, No. 300-301, February – March , PP 40-45.

Which is a great achievement. But the decentralization of authority which could have taken place has not happened till now. It was expected that this new system will help in empowering people at grass root level. But on human development index, India is ranked at lower position. This clearly indicates that decentralization has not taken place in the real sense.Seats have been reserved for women but it has also not resulted in the empowerment of women.

P.C. Mathur and Prof Ravinder Sharma (2013)[68]in their edited book which contains articles by experts covering various aspects and issues relating to Panchayati Raj Elections. This book is a outcome of proceeding of a national Seminar organized by the department of Political Science and Public Administration Jointly. Experts expressed their view through papers covering areas like Election Commission, election process, administrative system for election, Shortcomings and remedies etc.

Inferences Drawn From the Review of Literature

A plenty of literature on Rural Governance have appeared in the past before and after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act covering various aspects of rural local govt. in the form of books, articles, book review, minor and major research projects and research studies (Ph.d) etc. Review of literature in the present study reveals that the studies undertaken in the past have presented micro view of either one state or

one aspect. Some of the studies deal with state local financial relations, some studies analyze the issue of women empowerment and people empowerment through Panchayati Raj Institutions. There are some works in the area of elections, finances, functioning and role of PRIs in rural development. From the review of these studies, the following inferences are drawn:

- The system of Panchayati Raj has not fully succeeded in achieving its objectives.
- There is a lack of awareness among Panchayati Raj representatives towards Panchayati Raj system.
- The states are not willing to devolve powers to these institutions.
- Financial position of these institutions is not satisfactory that is why state local financial relations are not cordial.
- Seats have been reserved for SC/ST/OBC and women but it has not helped in the empowerment of these sections in real sense.
- There is a political interference in the functioning of these institutions.
- 73rd Amendment Act is certainly an attempt in the right direction but a lot need to be done.

  Present study is an attempt to review the overall working of Panchayati Raj Institutions inHamirpur and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh after the 73rdAmendment of the Constitution in particular, the study would focus on the impact of 73rd Amendment

on rural governance and analysis of the working of Gram Sabha along with prevailing three tier structure of Panchayati Raj in the state.

Area of study

The proposed study is on "Impact of 73rd Amendment on Rural Governance- A comparative Study of Hamirpur and Chamba Districts of Himachal Pradesh".District Hamirpur is the smallest district in terms of area with highest literacy rate in the state. In this district, majority of the population lives in rural areas with agriculture as their main profession. This district is having one Parliamentary constituency, four Assembly segments six block,1694 villages and 229 village Panchayats.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj has declared Chamba as one of the country's 250 most backward districts. Its literacy rate is 73.19% which is lowest among all the districts of the state.The district is having one Zila Parishad, six Panchayat Samities and 270 Panchayats. Half of the blocks of this district are backward and two blocks are tribal blocks. More than 45% of the people are socially backward i.e. SC/ST.

Scope of the study

In this study, it is proposed to study the structural and functional aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions at all levels i.e. Gram Sabha, GramPanchayat,PanchayatSamiti and ZilaParishad in Hamirpur AND Chamba districts of H.P.The working, achievements,failures of PRIs

will also be assessed.The time period of the study would be from 1992 (Post 73rd Amendment)till date i.e. 2013.

Objectives of the study

Present study will focus on the following objectives.

1. To study in detail the new Panchayati Raj Act of Himachal Pradesh in view of 73rd Amendment ofthe Constitution.
2. To examine the organisation and working of Gram Sabha in district Hamirpur and Chamba.
3. To study the structural and functional aspects of Panchayati Raj Institutions in HimachalPradeshpost 73rd Amendment and further;

a) To examine the provisions of reservation for SC/ST/BC and women in Panchayati Raj Institutions.
b) To study the election process of PRI's including chairpersons.
c) To study the devolution of functions to PRI's in terms of XI Schedule of the Constitution.
d) To study the personnel aspect of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Hamirpur and Chamba districts.

4. Toanalyse the financial position of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Hamirpur and Chamba districts after 73rd Amendment.
5. To Study the nature and extent of State control over Panchayati Raj Institutions.
6. To examine the perception of people towards the working of PRI's after 73rdAmendment of the constitution.

7. Suggest suitable measures to strengthen the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Hamirpur and Chamba districts.

Hypotheses

During the course of study the following hypotheses will be tested;

1. Despite constitutional status, the institution ofGramSabha has failed to prove an instrument of grass root democracy.
2. Lack of adequate resources is hampering the devolution of functions to PRI's in Himachal Pradesh.
3. Inadequate organizational capacity at the grass root level is coming in the way of smooth transfer of functions to PRI,s in Hamirpur and Chamba districts.
4. Provision of reservation for SC/ST/BC and Women has not helped in the empowerment of these sections of the society.
5. State Election Commission has turned out to be an effective instrument for conducting free,fair and regular elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions.
6. Absence of adequate staff at the disposal of PRI's is adversely affecting the smooth working of these Institutions.
7. Despite 73rd Amendment of the constitution, state control over Panchayati Raj Institutions has not declined in H.P.
8. The level of satisfaction of people towards the working of Panchayati Raj Institutions is very low.

Methodology

The study will depend upon both Primary and Secondary sources of data. Secondary sources broadly includes detailed study of constitution 73rd Amendment Act, Himachal Pradesh Panchyati Raj Act, Annual reports of the Department of Panchayati Raj Himachal Pradesh, books, reports, journal, circulars issued by the Govt. from time to time relating to the working of Panchayati Raj institutions. The internet will be used for consulting literature and building theoretical framework for this study.

Primary data will be collected with the help of observation, interviews, questionnaire etc. District Hamirpur is having one Zila Parishad, Six Panchayat Samities, and 229 Village Panchayats, Out of six Panchayat Samities, three will be selected and out of these three, five Panchayats will be selected from each Block on random basis. Similarly the Chamba district is also having one Zila Parishad and six Panchayat Samities and 270 Panchayats. Out of six Panchayat Samities, three will be selected on random basis and from each five Pachayats will be selected on random basis. A sample of 300 respondents will be selected giving representation to SC/ST/BC/Women and SC women etc. Out of these 300 respondents 200 will be citizens 100 from district Hamirpur and 100 from Chamba, 100 elected representatives 50 from Hamirpur and 50 from Chamba including Pradhan and UP-Pradhan and officials of Panchayati Raj

Institutions will also be interviewed. Detailed discussions with the officials of the Govt, members of finance and Election Commission, Secretary, Director and Concerned Deputy Directors of the Department of Panchayati Raj will be held to known their views. Informations so collected will be tabulated and analysed with the help of suitable statistical techniques.

CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1 Introduction

Chapter 2 local Governance-Theoretical framework

Chapter 3 An Analysis of working of Gram Sabha.

Chapter 4 Structure and functioning of PRI's in Hamirpur and Chamba Districts

Chapter 5 Analysis of financial position of PRI's in Hamirpur and Chamba Districts.

Chapter 6 State control over Panchayati Raj Institutions in Himachal Pradesh.

Chapter 7 Perception of citizens towards the working of PRI's in Himachal Pradesh

Chapter 8 Summary and conclusions.

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